

WORKING *together*

partnering in veteran-centered care

SPRING 2008



IN THIS ISSUE

Message from the Director	2
Welcome Bonnie Graham	3
VAPHS Country	4
Spotlight On...	6
Employee Service Awards	7



VA PITTSBURGH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

to all our partners



Terry Gerigk Wolf, VAPHS Director and Michael Moreland, Network Director, VA Healthcare - VISN 4, with William Vaupel (center), University Drive volunteer and Mason Representative at the February 14th Parking Garage Dedication Ceremony.

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System is fortunate to have so many vital partners in our journey to lead and define health care excellence for our nation's heroes. Our dedicated employees, compassionate volunteers, understanding neighbors, and watchful community and government leaders are essential to our mission of providing excellent health care, training future providers, and advancing medical knowledge through research. And we certainly would not be able to provide the best possible care and services to our veterans without partnering with them to truly comprehend their complex needs. Our new vision statement reflects the importance of this partnership.

VAPHS strives to be a conscientious member of the community, while welcoming other community members into our facilities so that they can honor America's veterans along with us. (You can read more about this on page four.)

The top five opportunities identified this year for VAPHS included enhancing communication and employee input as well as continuing to develop innovative approaches to delivering quality care. Accordingly, all of our partners are invited to contact our Public Affairs Office at vaphspublicaffairs@va.gov with ideas and suggestions to improve

the overall performance at VA Pittsburgh or to enrich this newsletter. You may have already noticed that *WORKINGtogether* has undergone a makeover. We hope that this fresh look will be even more informative and enjoyable.

As always each issue is available online (often before the printed copies are available) at www.va.gov/pittsburgh/quarterly_newsletter.htm.

While you're visiting the Web site you'll probably notice that the entire VA Pittsburgh Web site, www.va.gov/pittsburgh, has also been newly redesigned and is constantly being updated and improved.

This first issue of a revitalized *WORKINGtogether* features a few of the many accomplishments achieved by our dedicated staff in addition to updates on some of the events, programs, and changes that have been occurring here at VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System.

Sincerely,

Terry Gerigk Wolf, FACHE

Director and Chief Executive Officer, VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

VISION STATEMENT

Our shared vision is to partner with veterans to optimize their health and quality of life through integrated, innovative, and compassionate care.

Welcome, *Bonnie Graham!*

MS. BONNIE GRAHAM, MBA, began serving as VAPHS Associate Director on December 10, 2007.

Ms. Graham came to Pittsburgh from the New Mexico VA Health Care System, where she had been serving as the Clinical Business Administrator since May 2005. Ms. Graham has 20 years of operational management experience, including both clinical and administrative responsibilities, as well as considerable experience with Advanced Clinical Access and System Redesign. One of her many accomplishments at the New Mexico VA Health Care System was the proposal and implementation of an organizational restructuring, including improved administrative processes to better support clinical services.

Before joining VA in New Mexico in January 2004, Ms. Graham had extensive experience managing health care in the private sector, including leading medical group operations of 200 employed physicians and 1,100 staff with an annual budget of \$90 million at Lovelace Health Systems, Inc. in Albuquerque, NM. Additionally, Ms. Graham implemented a clinical pharmacy plan that resulted in savings of \$1.3 million in one year and renegotiated contracts for plant operations, environmental services and food services which resulted in an annual savings of \$1.2 million.

Ms. Graham is very pleased to have joined VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, and plans to expand our System Redesign focus to further improve processes throughout the healthcare system. She has begun working with a multi-disciplinary team to improve the utilization of space in order to facilitate growth and program development.

Ms. Graham enjoys several arts & crafts activities, and designed and made her own wedding gown. She enjoys hiking and is becoming increasingly familiar with the cultural activities that Pittsburgh has to offer.

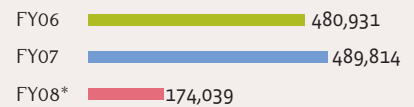
Ms. Graham received a master's degree in Business Administration from the University of Connecticut and a Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy from Tufts University.



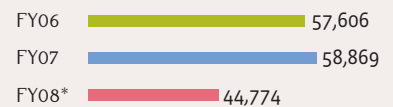
Ms. Bonnie Graham, MBA

vital statistics UPDATE

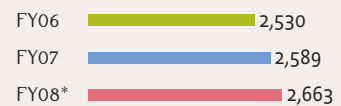
Outpatient Visits¹



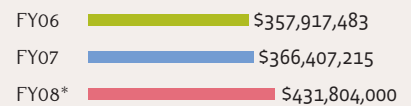
Unique Patients²



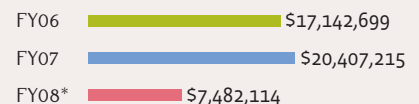
Full-Time Employee Equivalent (FTEE)³



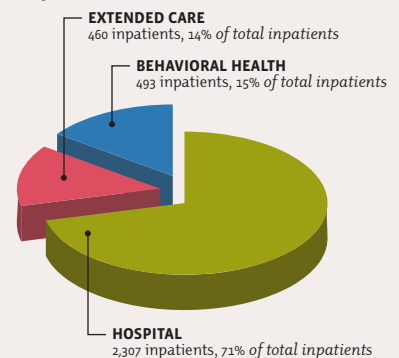
Operating Budget⁴



Total Medical Care Collections Fund (MCCF)⁵



Inpatients⁶



* FY08 as of January 31, 2008. ¹ Total number of outpatient visits at all three divisions and five community based outpatient clinics. ² Total number of individual patients treated at VAPHS. ³ FTEE, is the number of total hours worked divided by the maximum number of compensable hours in a work year as defined by law. For example, if the work year is defined as 2,080 hours, then two employees working 1,040 hours each would consume one FTE. ⁴ The operating budget includes expenses such as Salary and Benefits, Drugs and Medicine, Supplies, and Services. ⁵ MCCF is collected from third-party reimbursements from private insurance plans, outpatient prescription copayments and other medical charges and user fees. ⁶ Total number of inpatients treated at all three divisions.

Sean Mahan (far right), Steelers Center for the 2007 season, stated that he wanted to be at the VA today because he is able to do what he does (play professional football) because of what our nation's veterans have been able to do.



Max Starks, Steelers Right Tackle, thanked each veteran for their service and said that he feels safe to play football on Sundays because of their service.



Troy Polamalu, Strong Safety for the Pittsburgh Steelers, told veterans that he was honored that they invited him into their rooms.



ON THE COVER (lower left) Three Pittsburgh Steelers visited veteran inpatients and their families at the University Drive Division a few days before Veterans Day, raising their spirits by visiting patients' bedsides, signing autographs and posing for pictures.

vaphsCOUNTRY

ON THE COVER (upper left also see photo below) United States Senator Robert P. Casey visited VAPHS (University Drive Division) on Thursday, February 21. He received an update and tour from VAPHS Leadership and then spent the majority of his visit meeting and talking with veterans.



Senator Casey is introduced to Nursing Assistant John Ringdal by VAPHS Director Terry Gerigk Wolf, and Associate Director Bonnie Graham.



George Beatty, University Drive Admissions Assistant, demonstrates the self check-in kiosks for Senator Casey.



THE ANNUAL VA NATIONAL SALUTE PROGRAM began in 1978 when VA took over sponsorship of a program started in 1974 by the humanitarian organization No Greater Love, Inc. VA Voluntary Service staff plan and execute local events and activities at VA medical centers nationwide. The National Salute is observed annually during the week of Valentine's Day, a day of caring and sharing which underscore the Salute's expression of honor and appreciation to hospitalized veterans.

VAPHS National Salute Events took place as follows:

Highland Drive Division
FEBRUARY 13

University Drive Division
FEBRUARY 14

Heinz Division
FEBRUARY 15

ON THE COVER (upper right) Members of the Carnegie Mellon University Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) helped to pass out Valentines from local school children to inpatients at University Drive.



University of Pittsburgh cheerleaders stopped by during the Salute at University Drive to visit with veterans.



Pennsylvania State Representative Randy Vulakovich and members of the American Legion Riders visited long-term care patients at the Heinz Division.

VAPHS IN THE COMMUNITY

Allegheny General Hospital Auxiliary Gala
April 5, 2008

Veterans Outreach Event at Monaca CBOC
March 8, 2008

Greensburg Health Screening
February 23, 2008

DAV Chapter 76 Annual Valentine
Dinner Dance and Installation
February 9, 2008

Pennsylvania American Legion Housing
for Homeless Veterans Annual Recognition
Dinner
January 12, 2008

Allegheny County Medical Society
Installation of Officers
January 12, 2008

Federation of War Veterans' Societies, Inc.
Annual Veterans Day Parade and Trophy
Presentation
November 10 and 18, 2007

Greentree Health Screening
November 17, 2007

Friends of Danang Veterans Day Breakfast
November 10, 2007

Steubenville Health Fair
November 3, 2007

Veterans Leadership Program's Partners
in Leadership Awards Celebration
November 1, 2007

Pittsburgh Job Corps Center's
Scholarship Dinner
October 26, 2007

American Liver Foundation's Flavors
of Pittsburgh
September 16, 2007



Cliff Rowe and Joe Richetti present an aerial photo of the new University Drive Parking Garage.

THE 1,500-SPACE PARKING GARAGE

located at University

Drive was fully activated in January 2008. The garage provides much needed parking space for veterans, visitors and employees while featuring a parking guidance system, which identifies available parking spaces, and a built-in snow melt system, which will stop snow from accumulating on the roof and ramps of the garage. The cost of the garage was approximately \$37 million. Initial design was performed by RTKL with the final design by Tim Haahs Architects. It was built by P.J. Dick Corporation. A dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on February

14, adjacent to the parking garage in the main lobby.

ON THE COVER (lower right) Cliff Rowe, CEO of P.J. Dick, Trumbull Corp. and Lindy Paving Inc.; Joe Richetti, VAPHS Senior Resident Engineer; Terry Gerigk Wolf, Director of VAPHS; and Michael Moreland, Network Director, VA Healthcare - VISN 4.

spotlight on...

DR. TIMOTHY BURKE

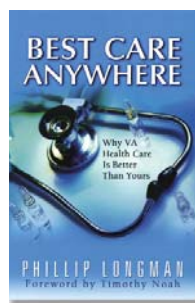
Timothy Burke, M.D., was recently appointed as the Vice President of the Primary Care Service Line. His service line cares for approximately 40,000 veterans in eight outpatient clinics and provides attending and hospitalist coverage for the inpatient general medicine teams at University Drive. The Primary Care Service Line is responsible for 22 mission-critical performance targets and collaborates with Medical Specialty and Critical Care Service Lines on the Joint Commission Core Measures for Pneumonia and Heart Failure.



Timothy Burke, M.D.

Dr. Burke first joined VA as a staff physician at the Syracuse VA Medical Center in 1999. He began working at VAPHS in August 2004 as the clinical leader of the "Green Team" primary care team at Heinz and has also served as the section chief of the hospitalist medicine service at VAPHS. He is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and a Diplomate of the American Board of Internal Medicine.

During his career in medicine, Dr. Burke has witnessed VA becoming the very paradigm of how to do things right, how to measure and improve. "Those principles have expanded to other service lines and to acute and inpatient care, but those early victories that changed the fate of VA were fought and won by primary care providers," states Dr. Burke. He continues, "My vision for primary care is to continue that fight for quality improvement, to provide what author Phillip Longman calls the 'Best Care Anywhere,' and to recognize the dedicated doctors and nurses who provide that care."



Dr. Burke received a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of New Hampshire and his Doctor of Medicine from the University of Pittsburgh. He then completed his internship and residency at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, specializing in primary care internal medicine. Dr. Burke was born and raised in New Hampshire and currently resides in Aspinwall with his wife and two children.



spotlight on...

DR. ANGELA KEEN

Dr. Keen was recently appointed as the Associate Chief of Staff for Education. In this position, she is responsible for the oversight of the education and training for all VAPHS employees, as well as for the library service, which spans the three divisions. Dr. Keen's initial challenges in this position have been to understand the many nuances and challenges to providing education within the VA system. VAPHS presents a complex healthcare system, with employees having many diverse training needs. Understanding the needs of the employees and the system within which our employees work will be of benefit to Dr. Keen in this role.



Angela Keen, Ph.D.

Dr. Keen joined VAPHS in 1990 as a psychology intern. Upon completion of her training, she was hired as an employee and

Providing education to VAPHS employees is of high importance to Dr. Keen as she looks toward the future.

worked as a clinical psychologist in several areas including inpatient psychiatry, the Domiciliary, and the Former-POW clinic. Dr. Keen also held the position of director

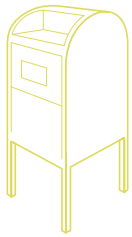
of clinical training for psychology while with the Former POW Clinic. Before her appointment as the associate chief of staff for education, Dr. Keen served as the business manager for the Surgical Specialty Service Line.

Dr. Keen's vision is to build an education program within VAPHS that is commensurate with the many clinical accomplishments for which VAPHS is known. She promotes a customer-friendly approach within the education department. Providing education to VAPHS employees is of high importance to Dr. Keen as she looks toward the future. Because the educational needs of employees are continually evolving with our clinical programs, Dr. Keen is extremely invested in recognizing and meeting the training needs of employees, including graduate medical education and the professional development of our nurses.

Dr. Keen received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of North Dakota. She is married and has two sons.

Dr. Keen has also recently been asked to temporarily serve as the Acting Associate Director for Site Management.





vamAILbox

DEAR DIRECTOR,

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE HARD WORKERS at the VA facilities at University Drive, Highland Division, and Uniontown, PA. I have been treated at all three. The medical services and attention I got was the best care I have ever had. The medication I get from the VA is a life saver and I would not be able to afford it on my own. Serving my country was the greatest pleasure and experience I have ever known and the care from the VA is equal to that experience. I am thankful everyday that VA is there for me.

Thank you,
—B.H.

DEAR SICU STAFF,

I CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH for the wonderful care you gave to my husband, B.B., during his stay in your unit. I have never met such a kind and gentle group of people in my life. You were not only great to B.B. but to our entire family. I will never forget all of you. Thank you so much for all you did to keep him comfortable during his last few days.

—P.B.

DEAR MRS. WOLF,

I HAVE BEEN A PATIENT NUMEROUS TIMES OVER THE YEARS and the medical care I received at the VA hospital has always been excellent. I am writing because of the medical care I received when I was admitted to your facility in November 2007 and the care I received at MICU.

I was admitted on November 27 for pneumonia. The next day I developed respiratory distress syndrome and was admitted to MICU. The medical care I received from the time I was admitted until discharged was exemplary. It was a difficult time for my family and me. The doctors took the time to explain everything to us and it helped ease the anxiety of the unknown. The nursing staff was professional and caring and always took the extra effort to see that I was receiving the best care possible. Words cannot describe the gratitude that I feel for the doctors and nurses that took care of me on MICU. Thank you.

Sincerely,
—J.R.



I am thankful
everyday that VA
is there for me.

I have never met
such a kind and
gentle group of
people in my life.

Words cannot
describe the
gratitude that I
feel for the doctors
and nurses that
took care of me
on MICU.

congratulations SERVICE AWARDS

Congratulations to the employees listed below who recently achieved a benchmark of dedicated service to the United States Government!

20 YEARS

Sandra Jo Beahm	Community Based Care
William J. Bergin	Geriatrics/Extended Care
Ronald M. Brncic	Facilities Management
Eleanor F. Campbell	Education
Margaret L. Chaw	Community Based Care
Norma J. Cline	Patient Care Services
Rachel M. Crofutt	Behavioral Health
Marian J. Ehrhart	Patient Care Services
Rose M. Fay	Facilities Management
Mary L. Foster	Geriatrics/Extended Care
Gregory J. Gallagher	Surgical Specialty
Gary H. Griffiths	Medical Specialty
Susan H. Jones	Patient Care Services
John Z. Kacprowski	Patient Care Services
Sharon R. Long	Patient Care Services
Roberta L. Mongelluzzo	Surgical Specialty
Natalie Nemec	Patient Care Services
Glenda A. Parente	Business Service
Colleen Paul	Medical Specialty
Trudy I. Praniewicz	Critical Care
David Ribic	Facilities Management
Bruce Richards	Patient Care Services
Dan E. Shaw	Business Service
Paula B. Tracz	Business Service

25 YEARS

Kenneth R. Azzarello	Community Based Care
Kris T. Breault	Patient Care Services
Raymond G. Burke	Patient Care Services
Thomas R. Comerford	Nutrition & Food
Suzanne M. Davis	Primary Care
Barbara J. Freeman	Patient Care Services
Shirley A. Gottron	OI&T
Michael Grover	Facilities Management
Fred J. Harvey	Facilities Management
Patricia M. Hayes	Primary Care
Lorraine E. Kerr	Patient Care Services
Kathleen G. Knepp	Patient Care Services
Raj K. Lall	Behavioral Health
Frederick G. Manners	Clinical Support
John R. Paul	Office of the Director
John A. Querio	Business Service
Dana D. Restori	Facilities Management
Dennis P. Sedlock	Facilities Management
Ruth A. Simonc	Human Resources Mngmnt.
Robert J. Sloma	Facilities Management
Rose Marie Williams	Patient Care Services

30 YEARS

Dale W. Brawdy	Facilities Management
Sharon B. Kwasny	VISN
Cathy M. Long	Facilities Management
Saundra L. Pennington	Patient Care Services
Patricia A. Stephens	Patient Care Services

35 YEARS

Paul L. Davenport	Nutrition & Food
Larry J. Drill	Behavioral Health
John D. Griffin	Business Service
James J. Mullen	Facilities Management
Eugene L. Reddel	Chaplain Service
Peter L. Strick	Research



Using My Healthe Vet helps you gain a better understanding of your health status, and allows you to explore a variety of ways to monitor and improve your health. When you use the tools My Healthe Vet provides, you become an active partner with your caregivers in understanding and managing your personal health care. And the best part is, you can easily access your personal health information in your My Healthe Vet account from any place you have an Internet connection.

While non-veteran patients cannot use ALL of the features, anyone can take advantage of the medical libraries, personal health journals, vitals tracking/graphing, activity/food journals, and more! Log on to: www.myhealth.va.gov today!

VA'S COMPUTERIZED PERSONAL HEALTH RECORD, MY HEALTHE VET, is winning accolades across the country. This year is the five-year anniversary of its debut and a lot of new, exciting features will be unveiled this year.



THE AMERICAN NURSES CREDENTIALING CENTER'S MAGNET RECOGNITION PROGRAM recognizes and certifies health care organizations all over the world that are dedicated to providing excellent patient care services. Magnet is the highest level of recognition a hospital can receive for excellence in nursing. For more information, visit www.nursecredentialing.org/magnet.



VAPHS has been striving to implement the Magnet principles and achieve Magnet status since 2004. Jennifer Mentz has been the Magnet Resource Coordinator since October 2007 and involved in VA Pittsburgh's Magnet journey since the beginning.

WORKINGtogether

ISSUE 28 | SPRING 2008

EDITOR

David E. Cowgill
Public & Community
Relations Coordinator

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Shelley K. Nulph
Public Affairs Specialist

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Rodney E. Boyce
Creative Director
Square Peg Design

PHOTOGRAPHY

Glenn Hangard
Warren Park
Medical Photographers



Employee Keys to E-mail Productivity

ACCORDING TO LEADERS AT APPLE AND MICROSOFT, we often do not give our full attention to any one thing and we live in a constant state of anxiety, mostly due to what one executive has termed Continuous Partial Attention (CPA). Sound familiar? Here are 10 keys to help you limit CPA and increase productivity:

- 1. Keep your ping tone turned off** – Turn off your e-mail ping tone and instead check e-mail every 15 or 30 minutes.
- 2. Keep focused** – Finish one message before writing another. Think before you send and send carefully.
- 3. Keep it concise** – Say what you have to say in a few words. E-mail messages are meant to be one-time, point-to-point communication, not letters or electronic conversations.
- 4. Keep it honest** – Be sure to delete the e-mail messages you'll delete eventually anyway. Letting e-mails linger in your inbox causes stress.
- 5. Keep it simple** – Be scrupulous about your subject lines and don't dialogue. If you need to dialogue, pick up the phone or walk down the hall.
- 6. Keep it clear** – Remove any wallpaper, stationary or quotes on your e-mail or attached to your signature block. These items may look nice, but they take up bandwidth and slow the system – none of us want or need that.
- 7. Keep it clutter-free** – To avoid clutter and chaos, *S.O.R.T.A.: Stamp Out Reply To All* – pick up the phone to congratulate someone or send out No Reply to All postings.
- 8. Keep it in plain English** – Try to avoid using company jargon or acronyms.
- 9. Keep it civil** – Consider the "front page rule" – don't say anything in an e-mail that you would not want to see on the front page of your local paper.
- 10. Get back to basics** – Studies show that if you talk more and send less, you'll have a happier and more productive day.

Terry Gerigk Wolf, FACHE
Director

Rajiv Jain, MD
Chief of Staff

Bonnie Graham, MBA
Associate Director

Ira Richmond, MS, CS, CNAA
Associate Director for
Patient Care Services

Angela Keen, PhD
Acting Associate Director
for Site Management

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

The VA Pittsburgh *Working Together* (1999-2008) is published for the employees, volunteers, patients and friends of VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. To submit comments, articles, editorials, letters or story ideas and requests for possible inclusion, or to request additional copies, please call us at 412-365-5513 or send us an e-mail at vaphspublicaffairs@va.gov.



University Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15240